A LETTER TO THE Rev. RICHARD ELLIOTT, IN REFUTATION OF HIS CHARGES AGAINST THE UNITARIANS, IN A SERMON, AT HUDDERSFIELD, March 11, 1792.

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true. 2 Cor. vi. 8.

Blame not before thou hast examined the truth. Understand first, and then rebuke. Ecclesiasticus xi. 17.

HUDDERSFIELD:

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PREFACE.

DETERRED, by what they have heard against Unitarianism, many will be afraid to look into the following Remarks; while others, who have read larger works on the subject, will censure this small one as unnecessary—and, perhaps, accuse the writer of vanity.

To persons of the first description, he would say: He hopes, some of them will, on reflection, be so far enabled to conquer their fears, as to suffer the accused party to be heard in their own defence: To those of the second, with due deference; That he thinks the numerous misrepresentations of the Unitarians, by their enemies, render it necessary that something should be attempted in answer.

Attention to business affording little opportunity for such an undertaking,—and conscious that, after the numerous and convincing proofs which have been published in defence of the Divine Unity, it would be difficult to produce additional evidence,—some of the arguments in the following Letter, have been taken

from authors justly esteemed by the discerning;—but whose works are not sufficiently known in those parts.—A circumstance which would add to the joy of their adversaries, were they not sensible, that, in other parts, the Unitarians greatly increase.

It is worthy of remark, that the far greater part of those christians who are believers in the Unity of God, were educated in the belief of the contrary opinion.——Many who were zealously attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, after reading and thinking on the subject, have changed their opinion, and become the most zealous Unitarians.

The late reverend Mr. ROBINSON, *of* Cambridge, (*not to mention any other at present*) *was a remarkable instance of this:—After publishing a book, entitled,* a plea for the divinity of Christ,—*one of the most plausible of the treatises on that side the question—he changed his sentiments, and in a letter to Dr. Priestley, thus expressed himself:—" I am " indebted to you for the little I know of rational " defensible Christianity. But for your friendly aid, " I fear I should have gone from* enthusiasm *to " deism; but a faith founded upon evidence rests " upon a rock.*

A LETTER

A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. RICHARD ELLIOTT.

SIR,

WHEN a ſerious perſon is heard to cenſure the conduct or opinions of thoſe who differ from him in religious ſentiments, it is reaſonable to expect, that he has viewed them with the tenderneſs of a Believer in Jeſus,—not attempting to expoſe them to the ridicule of the world, becauſe he *thinks* their ideas are contradictory to truth, but endeavouring in the ſpirit of meekneſs, to convince them of their errors:—that he has impartially and deliberately conſidered their arguments; and examined them by the Word of God, not by his own *prejudices*.

You cannot, Sir, be entirely ignorant of the horrid consequences of a contrary mode of procedure.—It was *this* which slew the prophets of Jehovah—*this*, which nailed the blessed Jesus to the tree—and shed the blood of his immediate followers.—Nor have those who imagined themselves the disciples of the Prince of Peace, when governed by *this*, abstained from inhumanity.—But it would be needless to enlarge on the refined cruelties of the church of Rome, and others, who have drunk of the cup of her fornications; —the unmerited sufferings of thousands, are too recent to be forgotten.

At present, men are apt to deceive themselves, by supposing they possess not this antichristian spirit, because, unassisted by the civil power, they cannot proceed to deeds so atrocious;—but personal violence is not the only manner in which persecuting principles are made manifest.—To gratify malice—to gain popularity —to indulge the cravings of avarice—nay, frequently, from mistaken notions of religion, and an overheated zeal—the grossest calumny and unprovoked abuse find vent—to cast an odium on those, who—having searched the Scriptures, to discover, whether the doctrines which they had been taught in early life were agreeable to the truth, or not—had thought proper to renounce certain tenets, which they considered as *corruptions of Christianity;*—obeying the commandments of God, rather than the commandments of men.

Though

THOUGH I would candidly hope, Sir, that you are neither governed by malice, popularity, nor avarice,—I do not hesitate to declare, that on certain occasions you have manifested a zeal without knowledge:—Nor shall I scruple to point out certain passages, which appear to me to justify this declaration; sensible, at the same time, that —though one of those against whom this zeal is directed—reproving with mildness will, with some of your admirers, subject me to the charge of *an attempt to deceive;* or, censuring with becoming freedom, be called, *the blasphemy of an infidel.*

IN compliance with the request of a friend, who constantly attends the methodist chapel, in Huddersfield, I accompanied him thither, on Sunday evening, the 11th of March,—and heard you preach from Rev. vi. 17. *For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*——This has been considered by some able commentators, as descriptive of "a triumph of Christ over his heathen enemies, and a triumph after a severe persecution*.——Contrary to this opinion, Sir, you supposed the text expressive of that time when the dead shall be judged; forgetting that it is part of a description of the *sixth seal*, (ver. 12.)—and that the *seventh seal* must be opened, (viii. 1.) and the *seventh trumpet* sounded, (xi. 15, 18.) before the human race shall stand at the judgment-seat of Christ.

NOTWITHSTANDING this mistake,—a subject so highly important, recorded in such sublime

* See Bp. Newton, and others, on the Prophecies.

ſublime language, afforded a favourable opportunity of *alarming* the *ſinner* in the midſt of guilt, by holding forth the terrors of the Lord; —and of *comforting* the *penitent*, and encouraging them to walk in the ſteps of their Saviour, by directing their views to that treaſure which is reſerved in heaven for them.

SHOULD you refuſe to admit the truth of the above obſervation, reſpecting your miſtake, I ſhall experience no anxiety on that account;—my principal intention being to remind you of certain expreſſions that evening:—Expreſſions, at which I acknowledge I could not be unconcerned —and which, on calm reflection, muſt give you pain; as they cannot fail to prove injurious to real piety, and are highly diſgraceful to a miniſter of Chriſt.

PASSING over ſome low abuſe, viz. the cynics, &c. as too contemptible for notice, I proceed to your more ſerious charges againſt thoſe chriſtians who believe in the *unity of God*.

YOU accuſed them—in language calculated to work upon the paſſions of the multitude—of ſetting up *reaſon* in oppoſition to *revelation*, by *ſquaring out*, as you called it, the actions of the Almighty;—and of deſpiſing or degrading the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:—then pointed them out as the objects of his vengeance,—and declared, that at the laſt day they ſhould not be able to ſtand!

TO appeal to your feelings, would, I am much afraid, be to little purpoſe. This, Sir,

was

was not the firſt time you manifeſted a want of charity.—On two former occaſions, I heard you throw out ſimilar invectives, and hoped, that in a little time you would grow cooler ;—but, I am ſorry to obſerve, you are ſtill as illiberal as ever.

YOUR firſt charge then, in the moſt open manner, I declare to be contrary to the truth.—Where, Sir, did you diſcover that they ſet up *reaſon* in oppoſition to *revelation?* Was it in their writings, or in thoſe of their enemies?—In the works of the excellent Dr. LARDNER, and other *unitarians*, provided you took the trouble to read them, you muſt have diſcovered the contrary:—if you have not read them, but received your language from others,—bluſh that you have been the echo of abuſe.

PERHAPS, Sir, you will ſuffer your attention to be arreſted, by a quotation, in anſwer to this charge, from a late pamphlet:—the author of which, has been complimented by you, in the pulpit, with the titles of, *a flimſy philoſopher*,—and, *one, whoſe opinions*, if they became prevalent, *would open the flood gates of impiety, and occaſion infidelity to ruſh on us as a torrent.*

" WHERE, Sir, have I ſaid that *the reaſon* " *of the individual is the ſole umpire in matters of* " *faith?* I call upon you to produce any thing " that I have written that will bear ſuch a con- " ſtruction. You muſt abſolutely have been " reading Bolinbroke, Hume, or Voltaire, and " have imagined their writings to be mine. I " think I may ſay that no man now living in

" this

" this country, nor perhaps in any other, has
" written more to prove *the insufficiency of human*
" *reason*, and *the necessity of divine revelation*.

" THE two truly great doctrines of revela-
" tion, are those of the *unity of God*, and the
" *resurrection* of man to a future life; neither of
" which in my opinion, could the unassisted
" reason of man have discovered, and least of all
" the latter."

NUMEROUS quotations might be produced to strengthen the above; but this is not a place for enlargement. Let the writings and opinions of *unitarians* be examined with candour, and instead of being enemies to revelation, many will be found among its ablest advocates.

YET observe, Sir, that the *unitarians* are far from wishing to relinquish their reason, when they consider the subject of revelation*; knowing that by the use of it the errors of popery have been discovered:—and that, as protestants, " we ought on all occasions, to call to our aid that power

* " You suppose that the *sense* only, and not the *authority* of Scripture, is to be determined by *reason*, and say that otherwise, *our faith, contrary to the Scripture, will stand in the wisdom of man*. But pray, Sir, how do you actually judge of the *authority of Scripture*, if you set aside the use of *reason?* You have two books, for example, presented to you, the *Bible*, and the *Koran of Mahomet*, and the *authority* of each is to be determined.—How are you to ascertain this?—Certainly you must have recourse to this so much dreaded and reprobated *reason*, if you make a wise decision at all."

Priestley's Letters to Burn.

power which God has given us to be the guide of life, and especially in matters so highly important to us, as those certainly are which relate to the will of God, what he requires of us, and what we have to expect from him."

If then, by examining the evidences of Christianity, our faith in the *divine promises*, be strengthened; how is it possible, we should, as you assert, despise, or think degradingly of the Lord Jesus, by whom the *glad tidings of salvation* were published?—Whilst we are thankful to God, and astonished at his goodness in sending his Son, "a sense of our obligation to our Lord Jesus Christ, as a person commissioned by God to *redeem*, that is, to *deliver*, *save*, or *rescue* us from a state of sin and misery; to give laws to mankind, to be Lord of all, and judge of the quick and dead," increases our love to him, and enforces, as much as any sense of obligation can enforce, obedience to his laws.

This, Sir, perhaps, you will not believe.—To be sensible of the goodness of God, and possess that love, which every true believer must have, for Jesus, you imagine it necessary to declare—that an *infinite satisfaction* hath been made to *divine wrath**,—and that the *eternal God* hath *died*

* "Is it not a more just and worthy idea of the parent of the universe, that out of his love to his frail degenerate offspring, he should by an express messenger invite them to return to their duty and true happiness, with an assurance of pardon and his favour; rather than to paint him inexorable, unforgiving, determined to punish to the uttermost, had not another being, more merciful

died for ſinners!——So far from acknowledging this doctrine, the *unitarian* is ſhocked at the idea of it.—Not, Sir, becauſe it is contrary to *reaſon* only, but becauſe it is contradictory to the *ſcriptures of truth*; which repreſent the plan of Redemption as originating,—not in the wrath of God, but —in his *boundleſs love*, and *good-will* towards man:—teaching us, that *by grace we are ſaved.*

But you accuſe the *unitarians* of degrading Chriſt, becauſe they deny, what ſome call, his *divinity*.——Recollect, Sir, a few words which dropped from you, in your diſcourſe againſt the *unitarians:*

ciful than himſelf, interpoſed, and appeaſed and ſatisfied him by ſubmitting to bear the whole load of his wrath and diſpleaſure due to wretched men, the intended victims of it? Such miſrepreſentation of the doctrine of revelation brings undeſerved reproach upon it."——
"Chriſt himſelf informs us, that it was purely out of his benignity and kindneſs to the human race, that God appointed him to be the inſtrument of his mercy to them. John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his beloved Son, to the end that every one that believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.*"

Lindſey's Sequel to his Apology.

"If, conſcious of many imperfections, and many failures in the diſcharge of my known duty, I have recourſe to the divine mercy and clemency, is not my gratitude and humility as great, when I conceive that I am indebted for the pardon of my ſins to the *free, unmerited,* goodneſs of God; as it could be, if I thought the pardon I received was *purchaſed,* by a full ſatisfaction made to his offended juſtice? If the ſenſe of gratitude and obligation, in this caſe, ariſe from my idea of the *freeneſs* of the gift, I think it muſt be greater upon the former ſuppoſition than upon the latter."

Prieſtley on differences of Opinion.

unitarians: that "we ought only to believe that "which hath the explicit authority of ſcripture." —Now, Sir, whatever explicit authority of ſcripture, you may diſcover, for ſupporting this doctrine, we cannot (though formerly many of us were almoſt as zealous in the ſupport of it as yourſelf,) find any thing ſufficient to authorize ſuch an opinion.

PAINFUL would be the taſk, of attempting to tread on the beaten ground of controverſy,—if your abuſe did not render it neceſſary, to ſhew thoſe who will hear *reaſon*, "in what a wrong light many well meaning people, who are governed by prejudices, repreſent thoſe whoſe religious principles they diſapprove;—of the truth of which principles they will not take proper pains to inform themſelves."

I PROCEED then, Sir, to aſſign a few reaſons, why we reject this favourite doctrine of yours,—and receive what you conſider as ſo dangerous.

"IN the Old Teſtament, nothing is taught but the worſhip of *one God*, and the greateſt poſſible ſtreſs laid on that worſhip, as oppoſed to the worſhip of *many gods*, to which the world, in the early ages, was peculiarly prone. The very firſt commandment, in which Jehovah, the only true God, is the ſpeaker, is, "*Thou ſhalt have no other Gods beſides me.*" Moſes, repeating this moſt important doctrine ſays (Deut. vi. 6.) *Hear, Oh Iſrael, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, and the prophet Zechariah (chap. xiv. 9.) *Jehovah is one, and his name one.*

"THE God who was thus worſhipped by the Jews, was alſo the object of worſhip to Chriſt and the Apoſtles. Our Lord deſcribes the *true worſhippers*, as *they who worſhip the Father*, (obſerve, he ſays nothing of *himſelf*, or the *holy ſpirit*, but only *the Father*) *in ſpirit and in truth*. John iv. 23. And when he himſelf prayed, as he frequently did, it was always to the ſame Being, called *the Father*, whom he repreſents as the *only true God*, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, that is, his *meſſenger*, or *ſervant*. This ſame great Being is called *the God and Father of Chriſt*, as well as of other men—*Go to my brethren*, ſays Jeſus, John xx. 17. *and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.*

"ALL the prayers of the apoſtles were likewiſe directed to this one God and Father, and to no other perſon whatever. *For this cauſe*, ſays Paul (Epheſ. iii. 14.) *I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*"

SOME perſons indeed, contend that equal honour and worſhip are to be given to God the Father, and to Chriſt, becauſe, in Rev. v. 13. our Saviour is emblematically deſcribed as a lamb, receiving honours and worſhip. But, be pleaſed to obſerve, that "the ground of theſe honours and worſhip, was not, his being equal to the Father, but becauſe he was ſlain, and had redeemed us to God by his blood. This worſhip paid to the lamb that was ſlain, (that is, to a creature, and to a mortal creature, capable of dying,) cannot

not be divine worſhip. Indeed if it be admitted that equal honour and worſhip are to be given to Chriſt and to God, from their being joined in the ſame act of worſhip,—it will follow that equal worſhip is to be given to David as to God; for it is expreſsly ſaid, 1 Chro. xxix. 20, that *all the congregation bowed down their heads and worſhipped the Lord and the King.*

"NOTHING is aſcribed to Jeſus in this paſſage, but ſuch *glory and power*, as all chriſtians acknowledge to be his due, becauſe in many paſſages of ſcripture it is expreſsly ſaid that God gave it to him. *All power*, he himſelf ſays, Matt. xxviii. 19. *is given to me in heaven and in earth. He received from God the Father, honour and glory*, 2 Peter i. 17. And the reaſon of this power and glory being given to him is expreſsly ſaid to have been his humiliation unto Death. Phil. ii. 8, 9. *Becauſe he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, therefore God hath alſo highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus, every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth; and that every tongue ſhall confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* How clearly does this paſſage explain that which is quoted from the Revelation; and yet how clearly may it be ſeen that in it Chriſt is diſtinguiſhed from *God*, and repreſented as ſubordinate to him, Heb. ii. 9, *We ſee Jeſus who was made a little lower than the Angels*, (the very phraſe which the pſalmiſt uſes to denote *men* in general) *for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.*—Now, Sir, let us appeal to common ſenſe, whether

the perſon *receiving* this honour and glory, can be of the ſame rank of him that *gives* it to him.— Can he be *a God* who receives from another, and eſpecially as a reward for ſuffering and dying?— Can God ſuffer and die?

" So far is Chriſt from being repreſented as God that in all the New Teſtament he is never called any more than *a man*, even in his ſtate of greateſt exaltation, after his reſurrection and aſcenſion. How, for example, does Peter characterize him in his addreſs to the Jews, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, when he is ſhewing his auditors how great a perſon they had rejected? Even at that time, when he would naturally ſpeak of his maſter in the higheſt terms, he only calls him (Acts ii. 22.) *Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns, which God did by him.* Paul uſes the ſame language, when he ſays in his ſpeech to the Athenians,— (Acts xvii. 31.) *He* (i. e. God) *has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that* MAN *whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* In 1 Cor. xv. 21. *Since by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead.* Again, giving as it were the creed of all chriſtians, he ſays, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* And again, 1 Cor. viii. 6.— *To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

" Is

"Is not *Christ* here spoken of as intirely distinct from *God*, and could the apostle consider the title of *God*, as at all applicable to Christ, when, in the plainest language possible, he thus gives it exclusively to the Father, *To us there is but one God the Father?* It is not *one God the Trinity*, consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, but *God the Father* only. Can any language respecting the person of Christ be plainer than this of the apostle? And yet we are continually reproached with departing from the plain and literal sense of the scriptures, and with putting figurative senses upon them.—The impartial will judge whether this be the case or not."

You may perceive, Sir, from what has been produced, that the *unitarians* take the Scriptures for their guide.—"Though they are often ill translated, by persons who, *believing* the doctrine of the Trinity themselves, have represented them as more favourable to it than they ought to have done, yet their general sense is still sufficiently clear in favour of the proper *unity of God*, and the proper *humanity of Christ*."

But it will prove impossible to convince some persons, of the truth of the above arguments,—who believe in *two supposed natures in Christ, the one divine, the other human*, and who will have him at all events, notwithstanding his own plainest declarations to the contrary, to be *God equal to the Father*. "When we alledge those sayings of Christ, that he was ignorant of some things, that the *Son did not know the day of judgment, but the Father only*, (Mark xiii. 32.)

that his Father was greater than he, (John xiv. 28.) *that he could do nothing of himſelf*, (John v. 19.) but received all his power and directions from the Father: the evaſion ſtraightway is, that all this is ſpoken of *his human nature;* as if he were compoſed of two perſons, one of which knew, and could do many things, which the other could not know or do, and which the ſuperior nature or perſon kept concealed from the other. So that although Chriſt aſſerts it of his whole perſon, I myſelf—*My Father is greater than I;* we are not to believe him; and in direct oppoſition to his own words, it is maintained, that *the Father is* NOT *greater than he.*

" If Chriſt may ſpeak of his *human nature* as of his whole ſelf, he may, no doubt, alſo ſpeak of his *divine nature* as of his whole ſelf, and conſequently he might ſay that he never ſuffered or died, and that he never roſe from the dead. But would not this be a miſerable equivocation, unworthy of any man, much more of our Saviour?

" THERE can be no doubt, but that when Jeſus ſpake of his Father as *greater than himſelf*, he meant what any other good man would do, when on bidding adieu to his friends on his death-bed, he ſhould ſay (as is very pious and natural) that he left them to the care of one who could do more for them than *he* could, meaning God; and he was then comforting his apoſtles under the proſpect of his departure from them by death."

STRANGE

STRANGE as it may appear, even you, Sir, bore witneſs of this important truth, though unknowingly, that Jeſus is the ſervant of God—for when you attempted to deſcribe his glorious appearance, and the qualifications neceſſary for the judge of the quick and dead, you ſuffered this expreſſion to eſcape, "Surely he who is APPOINTED to this, muſt poſſeſs powers ſuperior to mortal."—After acknowledging this, Sir, I hope it will not be preſumptuous to ſay, that whatever powers Jeſus may poſſeſs, he received them from that Being who *appointed* him.

BUT to return to your conduct.——After ſpeaking againſt others, as before-mentioned, you took care to enlarge on *your* happy experience of the love of Jeſus—yet forgot not the objects of your ſeverity, by informing your hearers, "that it is not ſaying Jeſus Chriſt is a good man, that will ſave any one,"—but pray, Sir, will the ſaying that Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt high God, raiſe any one to a ſtate of happineſs.—Could you for a moment, loſe the idea, that divine vengeance muſt be poured on us, you might diſcover that men will, at the laſt day, be tried by their *actions*, not by their *opinions**.

SUFFER

* "In all our diſputes about different tenets, and modes of the chriſtian religion, let us be careful not to loſe ſight of the *great end and deſign of chriſtianity* in general, *viz.* that Chriſt came *to bleſs mankind, in turning them away from their iniquities*; *to redeem* (or deliver) *us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The chief thing therefore, that we ſhould attend to, and the only rule for eſti-

mating

SUFFER me, Sir, to mention a ſingular inſtance in the conduct of the late Mr. WESLEY.—He, like yourſelf, had been terrified at the thought of perſons diſbelieving the doctrine of the Trinity, and could ſcarcely believe they were good men;—till he *read* the life of Mr. FIRMIN, an *unitarian*. Convinced of his miſtake,—he acknowledged it, in a note prefixed to an account, which he gave, of Mr. *Firmin*'s life, in the Arminian Magazine; in which he declares: "I dare not ſay that Mr. *Firmin* was not a good "man!"—Such was the conſequence of *reading* for himſelf!——Imitate, Sir, in this reſpect, the conduct of a man, whoſe memory, no doubt, you continue to revere.—Other excellent characters you will not fail to diſcover amongſt *unitarians*; and when you again find yourſelf diſpoſed to ſpeak of *their dreadful ſituation* at the appearance of their Judge—aſk your own heart: "Shall ſuch men "as Mr. *Firmin*, behold with terror the coming "of their Lord?"

REFLECT, Sir, on what is here offered;—conſider your conduct with reſpect to believers in the unity of God,—and, remember, that though the veil of *myſtery* may be thrown over the moſt abſurd tenets, ſo as to delude thoſe who will not take the trouble to think for themſelves.—"Yet perſons of better underſtanding, who are unhappily unacquainted with the more ſolid vindications of our holy religion; hearing how weak the defences are

mating the importance of any opinions, is their efficacy for this moral purpoſe. Let us, then, not ſuffer ourſelves to be deceived by mere words, and *pompous ſounds*."

Prieſtley on differences of Opinion.

are of what ſome ſuppoſe to be parts of Revelation, are apt to conclude, that nothing better can be urged for the whole it. Thus they ſtray from the fold of Chriſt;—and it will be in vain to think of bringing them back again, by declaiming againſt what ſome call *carnal reaſon*, and *the natural man*; and by telling them, that the doctrines of chriſtianity are not to be comprehended by theſe, but by faith alone, which can never be properly exerciſed till reaſon be forſaken and renounced; as if it were neceſſary for men to give up their ſenſes in order to become Chriſtians."

TIME, Sir, may occaſion you, to think, on certain ſubjects, in a different manner from what you do at preſent,—and though you ſhould continue to retain the doctrines you are ſo zealous in defending—you may not be ſo ready to manifeſt a want of charity towards unitarians—but wiſh, with many of them, "that men would deſiſt from dealing out damnation againſt thoſe who differ from them in ſpeculative points of controverſy,—that they would learn to practiſe the precept of their gracious maſter, and believe the declaration of his holy apoſtle,—the former of whom commands us to *judge not, that we be not judged;* and the latter aſſures us, *that in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of God.*"

I remain, Sir,

Your ſincere well-wiſher,

March 20, 1792.

A Believer in the Unity of God.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT has been proved, to the ſatisfaction of many chriſtians, that the *body of believers*, for more than two hundred years after Chriſt, held that the *Father only is* GOD, and that the Lord Jeſus was nothing more than his highly favoured ſon and meſſenger.——The heads of the argument to prove this point, may be ſeen in a ſmall pamphlet, entitled, *A general view of the arguments for the unity of God, and againſt the divinity and pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, from reaſon, from the ſcriptures, and from hiſtory.*

THOSE who wiſh to know what the *unitarians* have to ſay concerning thoſe texts of ſcripture, wherein the appellation of God has been held to be given to Chriſt, may conſult Mr. *Lindſey's ſequel to his apology on reſigning the vicarage of Catterick,—An examination of Mr. Robinſon's plea,* —or, Dr. *Prieſtley's familiar illuſtration of particular paſſages of ſcripture.*

SHOULD it be ſaid, that as it is impoſſible for unlearned chriſtians to judge of the authenticity of a paſſage, or of the proper tranſlation of it, they ought to truſt to our Engliſh Bible; I would aſk why they muſt truſt to our common verſion, rather than to any other? Were the authors of it any thing more than fallible men? Did they excel all other learned perſons in knowledge; or were they more free from prejudice? If not; why

why may they not confide in other men of learning and integrity, as well as in them? That the common tranſlation is very imperfect, and that a more correct one is highly deſirable, has been repeatedly acknowledged by the moſt competent judges both in and out of the church.

But though it is out of the power of unlearned chriſtians to decide concerning the propriety of any tranſlation of a text, through an acquaintance with the original languages; yet as they are able to perceive what the *general ſtrain* of ſcripture is upon any particular point, they muſt conclude that the probability is that thoſe tranſlators are right, who make the ſcripture conſiſtent with itſelf. If an unlearned perſon find, for inſtance, that the ſcriptures uniformly teach us, that there is but one God—that they never caution us againſt ſo underſtanding this as to exclude a trinity of perſons—that Jeſus is uſually ſpoken of as the Son of Man—that he uniformly prayed to the Father, as the being upon whom he entirely depended—is it not natural and reaſonable for them to adopt thoſe tranſlations of doubtful texts which do not make ſuch texts contradict a variety of plain and unequivocal paſſages? If they admit that the ſcriptures are conſiſtent with themſelves; they muſt either do this, or elſe interpret thoſe few texts which ſeem to be repugnant to the general tenor of ſcripture in a different ſenſe from what the words ſeem at firſt ſight to convey. And indeed this is ſometimes neceſſary when no diſputed doctrine is concerned.